

VALLEY FREE PRESS

GAY & LESBIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

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MAY 1998

ACCO CONCERT MAY 30TH AT UUCLV

ACCO, A Chorus Celebrating Women, will present its Spring concert entitled: "The Music of Our Lives" on May 30, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 424 Center Street, Bethlehem, PA.

For this concert, according to ACCO Newsletter, "ACCO draws from the glorious memories of its singing members to build a unique concert repertoire of music that crosses many styles and many generations of women! Artistic Director, Beverly Morgan promises the chorus will "sing up a storm" that will make you dance in the aisles."

Tickets are \$12 and are available at the door. The program begins at 7:30 pm, silent auction at 6:30pm.

SO LONG ELLEN - SO LONG JERRY DIAMONZ TO HAVE BENEFIT FAREWELL PARTY



The last episode of "Ellen" will air on May 13th at 9 pm. It will be an hour long show. The actual presentation of this final show was in question until early May when ABC finally gave the go ahead. Most people in the gay and lesbian community believe the show had way too short a run and lament its passing. Regardless of the show's termination, Ellen's coming out episode was a major moment in this century for millions of people who, until then, had never been represented in the media. DeGeneres won the Emmy for best actress in a comedy show and the show has recently won the prestigious Peabody Award.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ORDINANCE WILL BE INTRODUCED JUNE 3RD

Councilman Frank Concannon, has found a way to introduce the addition of sexual orientation to the ordinance on June 3rd though a co-sponsor has not been found on Allentown's City Council. The Allentown Human Relations Commission has determined that if 35 registered Allentown voters sign a petition to request introduction of the legislation the petition itself acts as co-sponsor. PA-GALA organizers hope City Council members who are worried about "political" ramifications will be willing to vote

in favor of the legislation as long as they are not required to formally co-sponsor. Four votes and the vote of the Mayor are needed to add sexual orientation (actual or perceived) to the current ordinance which prohibits discrimination in areas of employment, housing, and public accommodation. To write a pro-ordinance letter to City Council and the Mayor, see addresses on page 2.

After the formal introduction on June 3rd, City Council will assign a date for the committee meeting. "That's where the debate begins," says a Lehigh Valley PA-GALA representative, "people in favor of this legislation should come to both the committee meeting and the meeting where council will vote on its passage." Unfortunately, we don't know the exact date of those meetings at this time, but anyone wishing to know can call PA-GALA after June 3rd. We especially need to talk to people who have had instances of job or housing discrimination. They can tell their stories to City Council or we'll tell the stories for them. Council members have expressed disbelief that discrimination against gay men and lesbians exists."

Introduction of the legislation will be Wednesday, June 3rd at 7:30 pm at City Hall, first floor auditorium. Those wishing to attend this historic event are encouraged to do so. Though there will be no debate at this time, activists believe that a showing of people in favor of this legislation will have a positive effect on Council members. Attendance at the committee meeting and the vote meeting are of the highest importance. "Council is very influenced by large numbers of the respectful voting public." If you would like to sign the petition to sponsor this legislation call PA-GALA at 432-5449.



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Editors: Elizabeth Bradbury, Patricia Sullivan



PLANET

Parenthood

by Emily Dugan

IN PURSUIT OF LESBIAN MOTHERHOOD (Part Two)

We found an agency that does adoptions from China. One of my relatives who works for a children's agency volunteered to call and scope them out. She found out that they are happy to help lesbian or gay couples adopt, but that the Chinese government would not knowingly do so, and they don't want to be in the position of lying to the Chinese government. Another permutation of "don't ask-don't tell". The agency would not ask any questions about our relationship and if we brought it up, they would interrupt us and tell us that it was not relevant.

This posed a difficult ethical question for us. Would we play along with creating a deceptive illusion even if it was lying only by omission? It seemed that if a child already lost her family because of sexism, it would be a shame not to get a new family because of homophobia. So we jumped through the hoops. I skipped all the questions about marriage and relationships on the application, applying as a "single woman". I felt sad answering the, "What do you have to offer this child," question, since the most important thing we have to offer is the stability of a committed loving relationship and that we think we will parent very well together.

Then came the home visits. This was preceded by a flurry of "straightening up" activity. The first visit was just myself and the social worker. She was very nice and it went fine. She did ask some very personal, thought-provoking questions. At the end of the visit she said she was done with me and saw no problems but was required to make a second visit and needed to talk to Chris. Unfortunately, the evening of the second visit my brother managed to strand himself at a train station and called me to come get him (he does this sort of thing). I flew out the door hoping she'd understand that family comes first.

From Chris' report, what followed was an incredibly awkward visit. It seems the social worker couldn't figure out what to talk to her about.

She couldn't ask about her relationship with me. I guess she didn't need to ask her all those thought provoking questions about parenting since legally Chris is not adopting and is "just another adult who lives in the house". She just asked a few rather leading questions like "You're happy that there will be a child in your home, aren't you?" and "You don't believe in corporal punishment, do you?" It was really pretty awkward and insulting and I give Chris a lot of credit for putting up with it.

So we've been approved and all our papers have gone to China. We still have about a 9 month wait. But that's how long it takes to make a baby from scratch. Stay tuned for future reports.

Please send in your own stories of the joys and trials of gay and lesbian parenthood, or the pursuit thereof. There is both richness and humor in the day to day, and I for one would love to hear it all. (You can use a pseudonym to preserve your privacy.)

VOTERS' BOOKLETS HIT THE STREETS

Do you know how Governor Tom Ridge voted on gay marriage or on education legislation which would condemn homosexuality? This type of important information on candidates running in the Primary on May 19th, is all covered in PA-GALA's 65 page booklet "Gay and Lesbian Vote Primary '98", now available free at locations all over the Lehigh Valley. Five thousand booklets were printed, but they're going fast. The information is also available in issues of Labyrinth and PGN. Call PA-GALA at 432-5449 for the distribution outlet nearest you.

Allentown City Council and Mayor:

Terry Spinosa 836 N. 28th St. Allentown, PA 18103 #435-2530
Todd Stephens 2605 Appel St. Allentown, PA 18103 #797-0409
Emma Tropiano 416 N. 9th St. Allentown, PA 18102 #437-1064
Frank Concannon 1518 Pennsylvania St. Allentown, PA 18103 #432-5161
David Bausch 252 N. 7th St. Allentown, PA 18102 #432-3355
David Howells Sr. 136 Woodcrest Cir. Allentown, PA 18103 #797-8680
Ernest Toth 2910 W. Greenleaf St. Allentown, PA 18102 #432-1024
Mayor William Heydt 2626 Chew St. Allentown, PA 18104 #437-7546

A VIEW FROM A DYKE BY LIZ BRADBURY

THE BROWNHAIRIED AND THE BRAVE

Last year, right after the Pride Festival, dopey Morning Call columnist, Paul Carpenter, reasoned that since gayness is intrinsic, like hair or eye color, it's really nothing to be proud of. I wonder if Carpenter has ever lost a job for having brown hair, or been denied the right to marry the person he loves because of his eye color? Has he been called cruel names, "Hey mud hea,d, "Hey turd color hairr" probably not. I wonder if his wife, who is Asian, is proud of her heritage? Probably not, since it's intrinsic.

Then Carpenter said he'd called a gay paper in Florida to apply for a job and they'd discriminated against him because he wasn't gay. Carpenter was trying to make the case that employment civil rights would protect gays, but not him. Stupid analogy since employment rights based on sexual orientation means all orientations, including heterosexuality.

Picture this: What if Carpenter had to take that job in Florida because it was the only one available? So in order to support his family he lied and said he WAS gay. Or, maybe just implied it by not mentioning his wife and kids. Of course, he could never talk about them at work. No mention of his family or personal life, no pictures on his desk, after all, he would lose his job. One day, he might see a co-worker in a store, and he'd realize that it might be safer not to go out in public with his wife. He might realize that one of the teachers at his kids' school was his boss' sister. So he'd decide not go to any more PTA meetings or school functions. Of course, he could lie and say they weren't his kids, just nephews or something. His kids and wife would certainly understand because Carpenter had to pay the bills with his salary. Luckily all this wouldn't hurt his pride or self esteem, because after all, he was born straight, it's intrinsic, nothing to be proud about. I'm sure you can imagine it, I doubt Carpenter can.

Back to reality. Right here in the Lehigh Valley the Pride Festival is not far away (June 21st, Cedar Beach Park, Allentown, noon, be there) and I, for one am looking forward to the biggest

biggest event of the year with all the pride I can muster. Since we can feel pride through the accomplishments of others in our community, an extra big shot of it came today with the Morning Call. What a terrific article about the Lehigh Valley Gay Men's Chorus! It was bold, strong and brave! Here's a group who is not only proud of their singing accomplishments, but of their long standing relationships, their mission, and the political impact of their visibility. Members were quoted by name, and included references to long term relationships, the variety of jobs they had, their families, and of course a description of the concert and the chorus' achievements.

80,000 people read the Morning Call. When a picture of Trish and me accompanied an article about gays buying houses in Center City Allentown two years ago, hundreds of all sorts of people pleasantly commented to us about it. But for months after that it was gay men and lesbians who kept saying they saw us. Just last week a gay man in a store mentioned the article to Trish. Seeing someone who is openly gay and proud in the Newspaper makes every gay and lesbian person in the community stronger. The community will be talking about this LVGMC article for years. Yet local visibility is too rare. In the article Steve Olofson said, "(if our visibility) will save one teenager from jumping off a bridge, then it's worth all the abuse, all the obscene telephone calls and nasty letters."

Your article and your bravery have saved that kid already. Bravo! Courage is as contagious as fear.

HEY, FREE NATIONAL PR!

The Gayellow Pages is an index of gay and lesbian oriented or friendly businesses, services and organizations. The 450+ page book covers every city and town in the US and Canada. Its been published annually for 25 years. The most recent edition has 40 listings under Lehigh Valley, the 3rd highest number of listings in PA (Philly 158, Pittsburgh 100, Erie 29, Harrisburg 23, New Hope 15). Gayellow Pages also has a web page. A regular listing is absolutely free and will include your business or organization name and description, address, phone, email, and fax.. Also whether your clientele is predominately gay, lesbian, both, transsexual, women, or simply gay friendly, and if your business is gay owned. To get a free listing or bring your current listing up to date email to: gayello@banet.net or call 212.674.0120, or write Renaissance House, PO Box 533 Village Station, New York, NY 10014-0533.

POP QUIZ

1. What "Best Play" won the Tony in 1983?
A. The Enclave C. Children of a Lesser God
B. Torch Song Trilogy D. Angels Over Broadway
2. The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook was scandalous because it included:
A. "Gertrude's favorite aphrodisiac".
B. a recipe for peyote ground with cornmeal.
C. a recipe for hash brownies.
D. a tonic subtitled "Alice's Love Potion".
3. What was Gertrude Stein's nick name for Alice B. Toklas?
A. Pussy C. Pooky
B. Sweetums D. Basket
4. According to "Gay Trivia", David Nixon made news in Allentown in 1980 for :
A. being shot outside a gay bar.
B. spitting at a policeman.,
C. being fired from a teaching job for being gay.
D. taking a male date to his high school prom.
5. What First Lady's father is rumored to have had an affair with Noel Coward?
A. Eleanor Roosevelt C. Jacqueline Kennedy
B. Bess Truman D. Nancy Regan
6. Who said, "Why do motorcyclists wear leather? Because chiffon wrinkles too easily."
A. Paul Lynde C. Jack Benny
B. Rip Taylor D. Wayland Flowers' "Madame"
7. What was the 1st national lesbian organization?
A. Sappho's Sisters
B. The Mattachine Society
C. The Friends of Dorothy
D. The Daughters of Bilitus
8. Where is the Carmen Miranda Museum?
A. Rio De Janeiro C. Santiago
B. Havana D. Burbank
9. Who wrote the novel "Goodbye to Berlin", which was the basis for the film "Cabaret"?
A. Max Von Sydow C. Christopher Isherwood
B. Jean Genet. D. D. H. Lawrence
10. What was Tennessee Williams real name?
A. Alabama Williams C. Theodore Williams
B. Thomas Williams D. Thanet Smith-Williams

1. b 2. c 3. a 4. d 5. o 6. a 7. d 8. a 9. g 10. b

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PRIMARY ELECTION MAY 19TH

The Primary Election is Tuesday, May 19th. You must be registered as a Republican or a Democrat to vote in the Primary. Remember, in the Allentown Mayoral Primary last year, Martin Velasquez won over Emma Tropiano by one vote. The ratio of people who vote in the Primary compared to the General Election is 1 to 3, so your vote is 3 times stronger in the Primary. Some elections are actually won in the Primary because of weak opposition in the general election. So VOTE!!!!

WHAT'S NEWS?

The June issue of Valley Free Press will be eight pages. In the centerfold will be a calendar for the rest of the year containing information about upcoming events. Please contact VFP with event information and the meeting dates of your organization.

Valley Free Press welcomes the submissions of all writers (subject to editorial review) relating to events or subjects of special interest to the gay and lesbian community. Writers with ideas for articles are encouraged to call VFP at 432-5449.

Distelfink[®] by Ruby Zebu 5/98 "Hindsight"

I TOLD MY AUNT GERTIE THAT I THINK
EVERYONE SHOULD BE OUT AND SHE SAID, YEAH
KID, WHEN I WAS 17, I THOUGHT EVERYONE
SHOULD BE OUT TOO, THEN I WENT TO THE
SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS, GOT A JOB,
LEARNED A LOT, YEARS PASSED, NOW I LOOK
BACK ON IT, IT'S FINALLY ALL CLEAR TO ME.....

